

Annual Benefit Statement

Your annual benefit statement is enclosed with this newsletter. Review the statement carefully and contact SERS if you have any questions. The benefit statement contains important group health, life insurance and beneficiary information. This information should be referred to during the annual insurance benefit choice enrollment period in May.

The statement also contains an annuitant identification card. Cut it out and carry it with you as proof of your association with the state of Illinois. The identification card can come in handy for government and retired persons discounts.

The *Informers* is published by the **State Employees' Retirement System of Illinois**
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The Executive Secretary is **Michael L. Mory**. The Board of Trustees consists of: Chairman **Mark W. Gallagher**; Director, Bureau of the Budget, **Stephen Schnorf**; Comptroller Daniel Hynes represented by **Loren Iglarsh**; state employee **Sharmin Doering**; elected state employee **Caryl Wadley-Foy**; elected annuitant **Doris M. Clark**; and **Joseph T. Pisano**, retiree appointed by governor.

Authorizing Deductions From Your SERS Benefit

Retirees can authorize deductions from their monthly benefit payment to private organizations. The organization must receive approval from the Comptroller's office before deductions can begin.

Examples of deductions include private life and health insurance premiums; association and union dues, such as AFSCME, ISEA, RSEA, and RSPA; credit unions; savings bonds; and beginning July 1, 1999, charitable contributions to the State and University Employees Combined Appeal (SECA).

In order to begin deductions, contact the organization and obtain a deduction form. Complete this form and return it per their instructions. Deductions will begin after SERS has received a copy of the deduction form.

The Ease of Direct Deposit

Instead of waiting to receive your retirement benefit by mail, why not choose the convenience of Direct Deposit.

With Direct Deposit, your benefit is automatically deposited into the bank account of your choice. The Direct Deposit program has several advantages:

- Your benefit is deposited earlier, since Direct Deposit takes advantage of electronic banking.
- You don't receive a payment stub for each direct deposit payment. Instead, the Comptroller's office will periodically issue an earnings statement with information about your annuity payment. This comprehensive statement is also sent to you at the end of each calendar year.
- If you choose direct deposit, your first two payments are mailed to your home. All future payments are deposited into your bank account on the 19th of each month.

SERS encourages all retirees to take advantage of the Direct Deposit program. If you would like to enroll, or have any questions concerning Direct Deposit, call 217/524-8806.

Insurance Information

The annual Benefit Choice Enrollment Period for making changes to your group insurance coverage will be held during the month of May, 1999, with changes effective July 1, 1999.

SERS will mail the Benefit Choice

brochure and a special Insurance Informer newsletter to all annuitants around the end of April. If you do not want to make any changes to your insurance you will not have to do anything.

A Special Workshop for Retirees

If you have not already participated in a *Myths and Realities of Retirement* workshop, enroll in 1999.

MRR is offered by the State Retirement Systems to retirees, survivors, disability benefit recipients and their guests. This free one-day workshop lasts from 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Topics include financial and estate planning, Social Security, group insurance benefits, and health.

If you would like to attend an MRR workshop, complete the enrollment application below and return it to SERS. Further information regarding the exact workshop location will be mailed to you.

Circle the 1999 MRR workshop that you would like to attend.

Apr. 14	Elgin (40)	Aug. 18	Rend Lake (22)
Apr. 21	Joliet (47)	Aug. 25	Chicago (02)
Apr. 28	Utica (30)	Sep. 1	Chicago (02)
May 28	Chicago (02)	Sep. 8	Chicago (02)
Jun. 2	Galesburg (23)	Sep. 15	Peoria (13)
Jun. 9	Bloomington (89)	Sep. 22	Naperville (88)
Jul. 7	Quincy (28)	Sep. 29	Champaign (35)
Jul. 15	Springfield (01)	Oct. 13	Rockford (90)
Jul. 21	Rock Falls (14)	Oct. 27	Macomb (53)
Jul. 28	Marion (07)	Nov. 3	Charleston (58)
Aug. 4	Springfield (01)	Nov. 10	Fairview Heights (18)
Aug. 11	Jacksonville (39)	Nov. 17	Effingham (67)

Name _____

Social Security Number _____

Are You Bringing a Guest? _____

Return the form below to:

State Retirement Systems

Field Services Division

2101 S. Veterans Parkway, P. O. Box 19255

Springfield, IL 62794-9255

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I will be eligible for free Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance) with Social Security at age 65. Do I need to purchase Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance)?

A. Any member who retired or turned 65 on or after July 1, 1992 and is eligible for free Medicare Part A must purchase and retain Part B. Legislation was passed in July of 1992 that penalizes you with a reduction of benefits if you do not have Part B. In most instances, the State insurance plan would only pay 20% of your medical claims.

Q. I have been notified by my primary care physician that he will no longer be associated with my Health Maintenance Organization (HMO). What are my options?

A. If your primary care physician drops out of your HMO plan, you have several options available. You may choose another primary care physician that participates with your HMO, you may choose another HMO plan, or you may choose the Quality Care Health Plan (UNICARE) and use any doctor you wish.

Notify our office in writing if this happens so the necessary changes can be made to your benefits.